

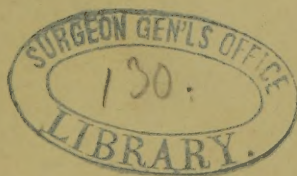
KNIGHT ^{and} DUTTON.

MEMORIAL OF
DR. TIMOTHY P. BEERS.

ADDRESSES AT HIS FUNERAL

BY

PROF. KNIGHT AND REV. DR. DUTTON.



ADDRESSES

AT THE FUNERAL OF

TIMOTHY PHELPS BEERS, M. D.,

LATE PROFESSOR IN THE MEDICAL INSTITUTION OF YALE COLLEGE,

IN THE

NORTH CHURCH, IN NEW HAVEN,

SEPTEMBER 24, 1858,

BY

PROF. JONATHAN KNIGHT, M. D.

AND

REV. SAMUEL W. S. DUTTON, D. D.



NEW HAVEN:

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1858.

GENERAL HOSPITAL SOCIETY OF CONNECTICUT.

At a special meeting of the Officers and Directors of the General Hospital Society of Connecticut, September 23d, 1858, the following resolutions were adopted :—

Resolved, That we have heard with sincere sorrow, of the death of Dr. T. P. BEERS, our late friend and associate, one of the original Directors and active promoters of the Connecticut State Hospital. In common with the whole community in which we live, we lament his death as the loss of an active, intelligent and successful physician, an excellent, worthy man, whose heart and hand were always ready and prompt in every scheme of benevolence intended for the relief of suffering humanity.

Resolved, That we sympathize with the family of our deceased friend in their affliction, and direct our Secretary to furnish them with a copy of these resolutions.

P. A. JEWETT, *Secretary*.

NEW HAVEN, Sept. 23, 1858.

NEW HAVEN CITY MEDICAL ASSOCIATION.

At a meeting of the New Haven City Medical Association, held on Thursday, September 23d, at the house of Dr. Eli Ives, the following resolutions were adopted :

It having pleased God, in His wise Providence, to remove by death TIMOTHY P. BEERS, M. D., one of the oldest members of this Association—

Resolved, That in the death of Dr. BEERS we are called to mourn the loss of a beloved associate, an eminent Physician, a wise counselor and a sincere christian.

Resolved, That in the removal of Dr. BEERS, the community have lost one who was eminently to them the "Beloved Physician."

Resolved, That we offer our sympathy to the family of the deceased in this their sad bereavement.

Resolved, That we will attend the funeral and wear the usual badge of mourning.

Attest,

CHARLES L. IVES, *Clerk*.

PROF. JONATHAN KNIGHT'S ADDRESS.

The life of our deceased friend has been unmarked by any striking events. In the course of it, no one day or year can be selected as especially prominent above all the others. From the period of early manhood, almost to the day of his death, he has been constantly engaged in the quiet, unobtrusive, benevolent performance of the duties of his profession.

A few facts tell the whole story of his external life.

TIMOTHY PHELPS BEERS, the son of Deacon Nathan and Mrs. Mary Beers, was born in New Haven, December 25, 1789. The memory of his venerable father is still fresh in the minds of many now present; while his aged mother still lives to mourn what must appear to her his untimely loss. He graduated at Yale College, September, 1808. He pursued his professional studies in this city, under the direction of Eli Ives, M. D.; attended a course of Lectures on medicine in the University of Pennsylvania, during the winter of 1811-12, and commenced the practice of his profession here, in the spring of 1812. In the summer of 1813, he was appointed Surgeon of a regiment of Militia, under the command of Gen. Hezekiah Howe, and with it was stationed, for several months, at New London. With this exception, and during a severe sickness about forty years ago, he has not probably been absent from New Haven, nor intermitted the performance of his professional duties for a period of more than two weeks at any one time.

In 1824, he received the Degree of Doctor in Medicine from Yale College, upon the recommendation in the Connecticut Medical Society.

He was appointed a Professor in the Medical Institution of Yale College, in the year 1830, and performed the duties of this office in an acceptable manner, until his resignation of it in 1846.

After a short but distressing sickness, he ceased from this life on the 22d of September, 1858, in the sixty-ninth year of his age.

These few events convey no impression of the life or character of Dr. Beers. His whole life has been marked by the entire, uninterrupted, and unselfish devotion of all the powers of his body and mind, to the performance of his professional duties. From these duties, he never suffered himself to be seduced by the love of ease or pleasure—by the desire of gain—by the pursuits of ambition, or by any other worldly object. He was repelled from them by no dread of labor or fatigue, by none of the surroundings which accompany disease in the abodes of poverty or vice, or by any apprehension that his services would not be duly appreciated or rewarded. Whenever and wherever his services were required, they were cheerfully and faithfully rendered.

For the performance of his professional duties, Dr. Beers had many well marked qualifications. Prominent among these was his entire integrity of purpose towards his patients. His sole object in all his intercourse with them, in his advice, and in his medical treatment, was to do them good. In all this he had no regard to any selfish end, whether of emolument, reputation, or any other personal gain; this integrity of purpose was so marked, and so uniformly shewn in his conduct, that it was never doubted.

In the performance of his duties, he was much aided by a constitutional equanimity of temper, which remained unruffled amid all the perplexities and annoyances which so often beset, and not unfrequently harrass the medical man beyond all ordinary powers of endurance. Trials of this kind were met by him, and disarmed of their sting, by a

calm serenity which told how little he regarded himself, in comparison with the feelings and the welfare of others.

Dr. Beers was eminently a benevolent man. Not many men made fewer professions of benevolent intentions, or their consequent actions than he ; yet his whole life was full of the working of a kind heart and a liberal hand. What amount of labor was performed, fatigue endured, pecuniary aid afforded, professional skill exerted in behalf of those from whom no earthly recompense was expected, cannot be estimated ; and the readiness and cheerfulness with which these services were rendered, added ten fold to their value. For all these services of love, the blessings of many ready to perish, will rest on his memory.

To these qualities were added others, which especially endeared him to all with whom he associated, whether as patients, friends or relatives. At all times, and under all circumstances, whether in the chamber of sickness, or in the family or social circle, he was a frank, sincere, cheerful man, without disguise and without hypocrisy. It was the manifestation of these qualities, in his manner, in his countenance and in his genial, sympathizing words, which mingled a ray of light with the darkness of the sick room, and which often left hope and cheerfulness in the place of despondency.

It was this frankness and truthfulness which inspired those who were under his care, with that abundant confidence in him which he so liberally enjoyed. No one ever doubted that any opinion which he gave was honestly formed, and truthfully expressed, or that any advice from him was for any other purpose than the benefit of him who sought it. It is a matter therefore of no surprise, that his patients and their connections should be his strongly attached personal friends, or that he should have been the chosen physician of many families for generation after generation, beginning at the early period of his practice, and continuing to his death.

Of his relations to the community at large, it is sufficient

to say, that he aspired to and sought for nothing beyond the limits of his profession ; he felt that to acquire a competent knowledge of this, and to perform the duties of one occupying a high position in it, was sufficient for him, and with the rewards of a life thus devoted, whether of emolument, of reputation or of social position, he was satisfied.

Of his professional attainments as a physician, little need be said. That he enjoyed a high reputation for professional skill in an intelligent community ; that this reputation was maintained for almost half a century ; that this popular opinion has been at all times confirmed by the high estimate in which he has been held by his professional associates ; all these things testify that he was fully qualified to fill the high position which he occupied. In one branch of his profession he was unrivaled.

If there was any thing peculiar in the character of his mind which guided him to the successful treatment of disease, it was a careful estimate of the facts connected with disease, a ready recollection of his previous observations, a familiar acquaintance with the great principles of medicine, and all these made available by the exercise of plain common sense, unobscured by any theoretical notions, and unobstructed by prejudice, or by the influence of any selfish or unworthy motive.

To all these excellent qualities, whether natural or acquired, there were added in our friend, the virtues, the faith and the hopes of a Christian. Sustained by these, he led a blameless life before men, endured the trials which happen to all, with fortitude and patience, and passed through the sufferings of sickness and the agonies of death, with the fully expressed confidence in Him in whom he believed.

The death of such a man, while there were yet apparently years of usefulness before him, has excited a strong feeling of grief in this community. The anguish which is felt with concentrated intensity in the hearts of his relatives and of those to whom he was the nearest and dearest, is widely dif-

fused in many hearts and in many households. Thousands will mourn for the loss of their kind and skillful attendant in the hours of sickness and distress. Thousands of families into which he has carried joy and thanksgiving, will long miss his well remembered face, and his cordial congratulations, while others will recollect the words of consolation with which he soothed them when suffering from the distress brought upon them by sickness or by death. Those of us who have been so long associated with him in our professional employments and in our social relations, feel that we have lost a kind friend, a cheerful companion, and a wise counselor.

The time will come when these feelings of regret for his loss will be mingled with others of thankfulness that he has been spared so long ; that he has lived until his own character has been fully developed, until his good deeds, the accumulation of years, have been known and acknowledged and will long be remembered, and until he has illustrated the value to the physician, of kindness, integrity and of unselfish assiduity. His work was done, and he has passed to his reward.

I hope it will not be unbecoming the occasion which has brought us together, if I indulge in a few remarks of a more personal nature, for I wish to bear testimony, however unnecessary this may be, to the many excellencies of our departed friend. My acquaintance with him whose lifeless body now lies before us, began more than fifty years ago, and continued without interruption till the day of his death.

Classmates and friends in College, fellow students in Philadelphia, entering upon professional life in this place at nearly the same time, our social and professional intercourse has been for all this period constant and uninterrupted. This intercourse has not been marred by an unkind thought or word or deed.

I can truly say that during this period of fifty years, while there have been few of the indiscretions of youth, or of the

unholy aspirations of struggling manhood, I have never heard from his lips or witnessed in his conduct, a word or a deed inconsistent with the character which he sustained before the world, of an upright, truthful, benevolent man, of a kind hearted, intelligent physician, and for many years of a sincere christian.

REV. DR. DUTTON'S ADDRESS.

To the words, which have been so fitly spoken on this mournful occasion, I will add a few respecting the religious history and character of our deceased friend.

He was early consecrated to God by parental faith and piety, and in his childhood and youth enjoyed eminent religious advantages, especially in the precepts and example of his father ; who was for a long time a deacon in this church, and its revered patriarch ; and who, dying nearly ten years since, at the great age of ninety-six, left a name still fragrant among us with the memories of his eminent godliness. Dr. Beers, however, though greatly respecting religion, and reverently attentive to its ordinances, did not experience its renewing power until the meridian of his manhood. When he was forty-two years of age, during that remarkable "refreshing from the presence of the Lord" which blessed this and many other places in our country in 1831, he took a decided position on the Lord's side, giving himself in faith and love to Christ. In April of that year, he confessed Christ before men, by uniting with the Third Church, in this city, then under the ministry of the Rev. Mr. Boardman. In 1839, eight years after, he removed his membership to this church—the church of his childhood and youth—taking his place in the seat beside his venerable parents.

During this twenty-seven years, such has been his manner of life that none have had any reason to doubt the sincerity and the truthfulness of his religious profession. He has loved the house of God, and has always endeavored so to arrange the duties of a large and laborious professional practice as to

attend on its services as much as possible. He has loved the word of God, and had intelligent and decided convictions respecting its doctrines and its precepts. He never so overcame his great natural diffidence as to take any part as a speaker in public religious services. Yet those, who knew him best, know that there were no services in which he delighted to partake more than in those of religion.

He had a kind and generous nature. He had a strong sense of right, and quick and earnest impulses of benevolence and compassion; and these, when they were directed and controlled by religious principle, as they were after his religious life commenced, made him a decided and firm friend of all righteousness and humanity. Ask for the side of justice and humanity, on any question, private or public, and *there* you would be sure to find Dr. Beers. These humane and kind impulses gave great beauty to his history and character, in the practice of a profession, which gives greater scope for them, than perhaps any other. Multitudes have there been, to whom he has been, without any reward, a messenger of healing mercy, or of alleviation and comfort when healing was impossible—without any reward *here*, except the consciousness of kindness and compassion. But he will *have a reward*, full and sweet, when they rise up in the last day, and say, each one, “I was sick, and you visited me.”

The christian faith, in which Dr. Beers lived and grew for nearly thirty years, sustained and assured him when the end of life came.

He knew, for sometime before he communicated the fact to his friends, that he had a fatal disease upon him; and when it came in its acute form, he felt, and said, that his “work was done.” His time, divinely ordered, had come; and he was ready to go. So sudden and rapid was the final progress of his disease, that it was but a week from the time when he was confined to his bed till his death. When his pastor first learned of his illness, two days after that, his mind was so affected by lethargic symptoms that it was diffi-

cult to rouse him to full consciousness. But, when roused, he was wholly rational. When asked by me if he could put his trust in Christ, his chosen Saviour, he answered deliberately but decidedly in the affirmative; and then added, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." "My trust is in the living God." The connection in his mind seemed to be this, "My life is fast passing away; but there is One who *liveth for ever*. My trust is in him." At another time, the next day, his exclamation, when roused, was "I know whom I have believed!" "He is my strength and my salvation!"

For several days his sufferings were intense. It seemed very painful to those who saw him that he, who had so often relieved the sufferings of others, should suffer so severely, and without any possibility of relief. Yet he never complained, even in the most violent paroxysms of pain. But he desired to be released. And when the petition was offered, a few hours before his death, that he might be released, he added most fervently and repeatedly, "O grant it, for Christ's sake, Amen!" Death was to him a most welcome messenger, delivering him from great anguish, and giving him entrance, as we fully believe, into the rest and joy of his Lord. "I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, 'write, blessed are the dead who die in the Lord! yea, saith the Spirit; for they rest from their labors, and their works do follow them.'"

How true it is that death, according to the declaration of the Scriptures, is *without order*—so without order as to baffle our predictions! Looking upon the hale and hearty face and form of Dr. Beers, one which nearly three score years and ten had made little impression, and especially when we remembered the great age of both his parents, we expected for him many years more of life. Who thought that he would die before his mother, now in her ninety-sixth year, and who now must look in vain for his daily visit of filial kindness? There are those in this company of bereaved relatives, whom

we have expected to follow to the grave before him, especially one more aged than he, whose most valuable life has often hung as it were by a single thread.*

Yet Dr. Beers had not the same reliance on these apparent promises of long continued life as we had ; as is seen by his reference to the death of a friend, which was strikingly coincident with his own. At the last Commencement of Yale College, the class of which Dr. Beers was a member, celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of their graduation, in a meeting at the house of their classmate, Hon. Ralph I. Ingersoll, of this city. After the meeting was over, a classmate and family friend of Dr. Beers, who accompanied him home, said to him, " Doctor, we were all agreed that *you* were the youngest and healthiest looking of the whole class." " Yes," responded Dr. Beers, " and so we said at our last meeting, ten years ago, of Joseph Bellamy, and in two months he was dead !" Now, in just two months from that time, *Dr. Beers is dead !* Oh ! there is no relying on the appearances of health and strength. Dr. Beers knew it, and felt it. We should all feel it, as well as know it. No age, no vigor, exempts from liability to death. Often the strong are taken, while the feeble are left !

Our wisdom, as well as our duty, is to be as our friend was, in *constant preparation* for death, by faith and obedience, and a life hid with Christ in God. Oh ! Spirit of God ! so teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto *this* wisdom !

* Dr. Eli Ives.

